

DE/2026-026 – Freedom of Information Request

Request:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please provide the following recorded information held by your department regarding assurance processes for software based data erasure of end of life IT equipment.

For clarity, this request relates solely to software based data destruction. Please exclude physical destruction methods such as shredding, crushing, degaussing or disintegration.

1. Please confirm whether departmental policy, contractual terms or internal procedures require an explicit outcome based warranty or guarantee confirming that personal data has been rendered irretrievable through software based erasure, whether carried out internally or by an external provider.
2. Where software based data destruction is performed internally, what recorded evidential assurance does the department rely upon to conclude that the final data state is irretrievable?
3. Where software based data destruction is performed by a third party provider, does the department hold recorded information demonstrating that any warranty or assurance provided explicitly extends to the software erasure method used and its claimed effectiveness? If so, please confirm the recorded nature of that verification.
4. Where no explicit outcome based warranty is required or provided, what recorded form of evidential assurance does the department rely upon to conclude that software based erasure has rendered personal data irretrievable?

I am not requesting technical configuration detail, security sensitive information or supplier specific vulnerabilities. I am seeking confirmation of the assurance model relied upon for software based data destruction.

Department Response:

I refer to your request under the above legislation for information about software-based data destruction assurance.

I wish to advise you that following a search of our records the information you have requested in relation to assurance processes for software-based data erasure of end-of- life IT equipment, is not held by the Department. As part of the

transformation of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, IT Provision was centralised for all Departments under one body called Digital, Security & Financial Shared Services (DSF). This body is under the sponsorship of the Department of Finance of Northern Ireland (DoF). You can request information from DSF via DoF at this email address - foi@finance-ni.gov.uk